

07 EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

105 STATE PLANNING OFFICE

Chapter 208: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN REVIEW CRITERIA RULE

SUMMARY: This chapter establishes the criteria the State Planning Office uses to review community comprehensive plans for consistency with the goals and guidelines of the Growth Management Act (30-A MRSA §4312 et seq.). The Office uses this Chapter to review and comment on proposed comprehensive plans under §4347-A(1) of the Act, and to review the plan component of local growth management programs for which certification has been requested under §4347-A(2).

SECTION 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES

1. Purpose

The primary purpose of this Chapter is to establish the process and criteria the State Planning Office uses to review community comprehensive plans for consistency with the goals and guidelines of the Growth Management Act (30-A MRSA §4312 et seq.). If a community requests certification of its growth management program under 30-A MRSA §4347-A(2), the Office also uses this Chapter to review the comprehensive plan component of that program. This Chapter sets forth a two-part process for the Office's consistency review: 1) a completeness determination for all required elements of a comprehensive plan; and 2) a more in-depth review of the Future Land Use Plan.

The criteria of this Chapter are based on the Act's goals, substantive guidelines, and procedures. They are not intended to prohibit or discourage a community from developing a plan, ordinance, or program that is more specific or detailed, or that covers more subject areas than called for by required elements.

2. Definitions

The following terms, as used in the Act and this Chapter, have the following meanings unless the context indicates otherwise:

- A. Act: "Act" means the Growth Management Act (30-A MRSA §4312 et seq.).
- B. Amendment: "Amendment" means a change to a comprehensive plan that is adopted subsequent to an Office finding that the plan is consistent with the Growth Management Act.
- C. Applicable regional council: "Applicable regional council" means the council of governments, established under 30-A MRSA §2311-2316, or regional planning commission, established under 30-A MRSA §2321-2326, that is the authorized review agency for the regional planning and development district or subdistrict, designated under 30-A MRSA §2341-2342, within which the community submitting a comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance is located.

- D. Arterial: "Arterial" means a highway providing long-distance connections as approved by the Federal Highway Administration pursuant to 23 Code of Federal Regulation, Section 470.105(b)(1999) and as so designated by MaineDOT pursuant to the Maine Highway Driveway and Entrance regulations, 17-229 CMR 299.
- E. Business day: "Business Day" means Monday through Friday, excluding federal and state holidays.
- F. Capital Improvement Program: "Capital Improvement Program" (CIP) means a detailed schedule for capital improvements, estimates of total cost of each improvement, financing sources, scheduling of construction starts or equipment life spans, and projected annual expenditures. The CIP implements the Capital Investment Plan that is prepared as part of the comprehensive plan.
- G. Capital Investment: "Capital Investment" means expending municipal funds to purchase assets such as land, machinery, or buildings. For the purposes of this Chapter, capital investments at a minimum include expenditures of more than \$10,000 that are used to purchase assets that serve a useful life of at least five (5) years.
- H. Capital Investment Plan: "Capital Investment Plan" (CInP) means a summary list of municipal capital investments anticipated during the planning period in order to implement the strategies in the comprehensive plan.
- I. Commercial development: "Commercial development" means for-profit business operations that provide goods, services, or commodities. For the purposes of this Chapter, home occupations are not considered commercial development.
- J. Community: "Community" means any municipality or multi-municipal region.
- K. Comprehensive plan: "Comprehensive plan" or "plan" means a document or interrelated documents developed by a community in accordance with the procedural provisions of 30-A MRSA §4324, and the substantive requirements of 30-A MRSA §4326.
- L. Critical natural resource: "Critical natural resources" means those areas in the community comprised of one or more of the following:
 - (1) Shoreland zone;
 - (2) Large habitat blocks;
 - (3) Multi-function wetlands;
 - (4) Essential Wildlife Habitats and Threatened, Endangered, and Special Concern Species occurrences as depicted on maps prepared by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to the Maine Endangered Species Act;
 - (5) Significant wildlife habitat as defined in 38 MRSA §480-B(10);
 - (6) Significant freshwater fisheries habitat;
 - (7) Rare and exemplary natural communities, and rare plant occurrences as determined by the State's Natural Areas Program database;
 - (8) Coastal sand dune systems as defined in the Natural Resources Protection Act (38 MRSA §480-B(1));
 - (9) Beginning with Habitat Focus Areas of Ecological Significance identified by the Beginning with Habitat Program of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife ;

- (10) Fragile mountain areas as defined in 38 MRSA §480-B(3);
 - (11) Coastal bluffs and coastal landslide hazards as depicted on maps prepared by the Maine Geological Survey;
 - (12) Flood plains as depicted on Federal Emergency Management Agency flood hazard identification maps; or
 - (13) Areas designated as a National Natural Landmark pursuant to the National Park Service's National Natural Landmark Program (36 Code of Federal Regulation, Section 62).
- M. Critical Resource Area: "Critical Resource Area" means those areas in a community most vulnerable to impacts from development and must include:
- (1) Critical rural areas;
 - (2) Critical natural resources; and
 - (3) Critical waterfront areas.
- N. Critical rural area: "Critical rural area" means a rural area that is specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from development to preserve natural resources and related economic activities that may include, but are not limited to, significant farmland, forest land or mineral resources; high-value wildlife or fisheries habitat; scenic areas; public water supplies; scarce or especially vulnerable natural resources; and open lands functionally necessary to support a vibrant rural economy.
- O. Critical waterfront area: "Critical waterfront area" means a shorefront area characterized by functionally water-dependent uses, as defined in MRSA 38 §436-A(6), and specifically identified and designated by a community's comprehensive plan as deserving maximum protection from incompatible development.
- P. Floor area: "Floor area" means the total area covered by all floors in a building, typically measured in square feet or acres.
- Q. Growth area: "Growth area" means an area that is designated in a community's comprehensive plan as suitable for orderly residential, commercial, or industrial development, or any combinations of those types of development and related infrastructure, and into which most development projected over 10 years is directed.
- R. Growth management program: "Growth management program" means a set of interrelated documents that comprise a comprehensive plan and implementation program, including zoning ordinances, as described in 30-A MRSA §4326.
- S. Industrial development: "Industrial development" means business operations that manufacture, process, or store goods or commodities. For the purposes of this Chapter, home occupations are not considered industrial development.
- T. Institutional development: "Institutional development" means establishments such as governmental facilities, colleges, vocational schools, hospitals, or health care facilities.
- U. Large habitat blocks: "Large habitat blocks" means contiguous, undeveloped areas of 150 acres or more.
- V. Managed forest lands: "managed forest lands" means lands managed for any of the following purposes: timber stand improvement, timber or other forest products harvesting, regeneration of forest stands, habitat management, aesthetics, recreation, or water quality protection.

- W. Marine transportation facilities: "Marine transportation facilities" means public and private facilities used for cargo and/or passenger transport that rely on water access, including infrastructure and support facilities such as buildings, piers, docks, parking, and storage.
- X. Minimal commercial/institutional development: "Minimal commercial development" means that there has been less than a ten (10) percent increase in the floor area devoted to commercial and institutional development in the community over the previous ten (10) years.
- Y. Minimal industrial development: "Minimal industrial development" means that there has been less than a ten (10) percent increase in the floor area devoted to industrial development in the community over previous ten (10) years.
- Z. Minimal residential development: "Minimal residential development" means that residential development in the community is characterized by:
 - (1) Less than five (5) percent population growth over the previous ten (10) years; and
 - (2) Less than fifty (50) units of residential housing, including apartment, condominium, and seasonal units, constructed over previous ten (10) years.
- AA. Mobility corridor: "Mobility corridor" means an arterial that is a designated "mobility corridor" pursuant to the Maine Highway Driveway and Entrance regulations, 17-229 CMR 299.
- BB. Multi-function wetlands: "Multi-function wetlands" means those wetlands found to provide three of more wetland functions as depicted on the Wetlands Characterization Maps developed by the Office.
- CC. Municipal growth-related capital investment: "Municipal growth-related capital investment" means investment by the municipality in the following projects, even if privately-owned, using municipal, county, state, federal, or other public funds, in the form of a purchase, lease, grant, loan, loan guarantee, credit, tax credit, or other financial assistance:
 - (1) Construction of new transportation infrastructure or capacity;
 - (2) Construction or acquisition of newly constructed multifamily rental or affordable housing;
 - (3) Development of industrial or business parks;
 - (4) Construction or extension of sewer, water, or other utility lines;
 - (5) Construction of public, quasi-public, or private service infrastructure, facilities, and community buildings; or
 - (6) Construction or expansion of municipal office buildings, municipal educational facilities, municipal courts, and other quasi-public facilities and other civic buildings that serve public clients and customers.

Municipal growth-related capital investment does not include investment in the following: the operation or maintenance of a governmental or quasi-governmental facility or program; the renovation of a governmental facility that does not significantly expand the facility's capacity; maintenance of existing transportation infrastructure without significantly expanding capacity; municipal revenue sharing; capital projects that by their purpose are likely to be outside a growth area (such as recreational trails, drinking water holding or purification systems, public works facilities, landfills, etc.); or public health programs.
- DD. Municipal officers. "Municipal officers" means the selectmen or councilors of a town, or the mayor and aldermen or councilors of a city.

- EE. Non-point sources of pollution. "Nonpoint sources of pollution" means facilities, activities, or any circumstance that cause rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation water, running over land or through the ground, to pick up pollutants and to deposit them into rivers, lakes, coastal waters, or ground water.
- FF. Office: "Office" means the State Planning Office.
- GG. Planning committee: "Planning committee" means the committee established by the municipal officers of a municipality, or combination of municipalities, in accord with 30-A MRSA §4324(2), which has general responsibility for the comprehensive plan.
- HH. Planning period: "Planning period" means a minimum of ten (10) years.
- II. Regional council: "Regional council" means the council of governments, established under 30-A MRSA §2311-2316, or regional planning commission, established under 30-A MRSA §2321-2326, that is the authorized review agency for the regional planning and development district or subdistrict, designated under 30-A MRSA §2341-2342.
- JJ. Rural area. "Rural area" means a geographic area that is identified and designated in a community's comprehensive plan as an area that is deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat, and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over 10 years is diverted.
- KK. Shoreland zone: "Shoreland zone" means the same as "Shoreland Area" in the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 MRSA §435 et seq.).
- LL. Significant freshwater fisheries habitat: "Significant freshwater fisheries habitat" means any freshwater river, stream, brook, lake, or pond that is identified as:
- (1) a brook trout stream as depicted on maps developed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife; or
 - (2) diadromous fisheries habitat as depicted on maps developed by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Beginning with Habitat program.
- MM. State Transportation System: "State transportation system" means:
- (1) Maine Department of Transportation and Maine Turnpike Authority administered or supervised state or state aid highways along with associated sidewalks, paths, trails, and/or bridges;
 - (2) Maine Department of Transportation administered or supervised marine highways, airports, and rail lines along with associated sidewalks, paths, trails, and/or bridges; and
 - (3) Any associated facilities essential to the safe and efficient operation of those state transportation systems, including but not limited to highway maintenance facilities, transit/rail stations, toll plazas, ferry terminals, cargo ports, intermodal transportation centers, weigh stations, rest areas, visitor information centers, service plazas, and park-and-ride lots, as well as parking lots and other infrastructure serving those facilities.
- NN. Stream: "Stream" means the same as "Stream" in the Mandatory Shoreland Zoning Act (38 MRSA §435 et seq.)
- OO. Strip development: "Strip development" means a pattern of development, usually commercial in nature, in which individual establishments have direct access to a single arterial or main throughfare. Strip developments are generally not in downtown areas and often lack pedestrian

facilities, but are characterized by automobile-focused access with multiple curb cuts in relatively short distances.

- PP. Transit services: "Transit services" means public or private operations that provide transportation to the public, such as rail and bus operations.
- QQ. Transitional area: "Transitional area" means an area that is designated in a community's comprehensive plan as suitable for a share of projected residential, commercial, or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area.
- RR. Wetlands: "Wetlands" means any coastal wetlands or freshwater wetlands as defined below:
- (1) Coastal wetlands include any of the following:
 - a. all tidal and sub-tidal lands, including all areas below any identifiable debris line left by tidal action;
 - b. all lands containing vegetation that is tolerant of salt water and occurs primarily in a salt water or estuarine habitat; and
 - c. any swamp, marsh, bog, beach, flat, or other contiguous low land that is subject to tidal action during the maximum spring tide level identified in tide tables published by National Ocean Services.
 - (2) Freshwater wetlands include freshwater swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas (other than areas considered part of a great pond, coastal wetland, river, stream, or brook) that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and for a duration sufficient to support, and which under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of wetland vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soils. Freshwater wetlands may contain small stream channels or inclusions of land that do not conform to the above defining criteria.
- SS. Zoning ordinance: "Zoning ordinance" means a municipal land use ordinance that:
- (1) Divides a community into zoning districts and prescribes the reasonable application of different regulations in each district to encourage orderly growth and development and implement a community's designation of growth, rural, and critical resource areas in its comprehensive plan; and
 - (2) Has been developed by the community in accordance with the procedural provisions and the substantive requirements of 30-A MRSA §§4324, 4326, and 4352.

3. Transition from Chapter 202

This Chapter replaces Chapter 202, which is repealed as of the effective date of this Chapter.

- A. Communities that have submitted plans or amendments to plans to the Office for review prior to the effective date of this Chapter but have not yet received a Finding of Consistency have two options:
- (1) Resubmit the plan for review under the provisions set forth in this Chapter. Resubmission resets the comment and findings deadlines set forth in 30-A MRSA §4347-A(3); or

(2) Continue to be reviewed under the review standards of Chapter 202 (which are incorporated by reference for this specific purpose only) until found consistent, provided consistency is determined within 24 months after the initial finding letter is issued pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4347-A(3).

B. Plans or amendments to plans submitted to the Office for review after the effective date of this Chapter must comply with the requirements of this Chapter, except that if a community submits a plan or amendments to a plan developed by a planning committee that was formed and held its first meeting prior to the effective date of this Chapter, the community has the option of having the Office review the plan or amendments under the review standards of Chapter 202 (which are incorporated by reference for this specific purpose only) or this Chapter, provided that the plan is submitted for review prior to September 20, 2008.

4. Submission Requirements

Plans submitted to the Office for review under this Chapter must be submitted in a manner and on forms prescribed by the Office. The submission must include all of the applicable required elements in Section 2.

5. Review Process

A. Notification of Completeness

Upon receipt of a comprehensive plan for review for consistency with the Act, the Office will solicit comments on the plan in accordance with Section 1.5(C). The Office will review the submittal and Self-Assessment Checklist for completeness; consider any comments received pursuant to Section 1.5(C); and, within thirty-five (35) business days of receipt, either issue a Notification of Completeness or notify the community in writing if there are any missing elements. The Office will issue a Notification of Completeness and begin its focused review of the Future Land Use Plan if:

- (1) The plan is submitted in a manner and on forms as prescribed by the Office;
- (2) A completed Self-Assessment Checklist is included;
- (3) The plan includes a vision statement that summarizes the community's desired future community character;
- (4) Public participation has occurred in accordance with the 30-A MRSA §4324;
- (5) A regional coordination program is included in accordance with Section 2.3;
- (6) The minimum required analyses, condition and trend data, policies, and strategies from Section 4 are included in the plan;
- (7) The Plan includes a Future Land Use Plan with associated maps and narrative;
- (8) An implementation section is included; and,
- (9) The plan provides for future periodic evaluation of the plan and its implementation.

A Notification of Completeness means that portions of the plan other than the Future Land Use Plan have been accepted by the Office as consistent with the Act.

If missing elements are identified during the completeness review, the Office will notify the community in writing of the missing elements. If a community submits additional information to the Office in response to a notification of missing elements within ninety (90) business days, the Office will review the additional information and, within ten (10) business days of receipt, notify the community in writing if the missing elements have been adequately addressed. If the missing elements have been adequately addressed, the Office will issue a Notification of Completeness.

A new completeness review process begins if a community submits additional information to the Office in response to a notification of missing elements more than ninety (90) business days from that notification.

B. Review of Future Land Use Plan

Following the issuance of a Notification of Completeness, the Office will review a community's Future Land Use Plan under Section 3 of this Chapter, taking into account any comments received pursuant to Section 1.5(C).

C. Comment Solicitation

Pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4347-A(3), upon receipt of a comprehensive plan for review, the Office shall solicit written comments from applicable regional councils, state agencies, all municipalities contiguous to the community submitting a comprehensive plan, and any interested residents of the community or of contiguous municipalities. Comments must be received within twenty-five (25) business days of the Office's notice of plan submittal. The Office shall consolidate all written comments from all sources and forward them to the community and any applicable regional council.

(1) State Agency Comments

State agencies may comment on a submitted comprehensive plan. If they do so, comments must:

- a. Identify the comprehensive plan being commented on.
- b. Identify the state agency and the name and contact information of its designated review coordinator.
- c. List any missing elements identified during the agency's review.
- d. Conclude whether the comprehensive plan demonstrates the appropriate use of data provided by the agency, how the plan's policies, implementation strategies, and other provisions relate to the agency's objectives and directives, whether the plan supports the agency's programs and policies in carrying out the goals of the Act, and, if necessary, what goal of the Act is not adequately addressed.
- e. Suggest what additional measures, if any, the community might take to improve the quality or effectiveness of its comprehensive plan.

(2) Regional Council Comments

Regional councils may comment on a submitted comprehensive plan. If they do so, comments must:

- a. Identify the proposed comprehensive plan being commented on.
- b. Identify the regional council and the name and contact information of its principal reviewer.
- c. List any missing elements identified during the council's review.

- d. Evaluate whether the comprehensive plan addresses identified regional needs and policies, supports existing, adopted regional plans, and whether the plan supports the adopted or proposed comprehensive plans of contiguous municipalities.
- e. Solicit and provide comments to the Office from contiguous municipalities.
- f. Suggest what additional measures, if any, the community might take to improve the quality or effectiveness of its comprehensive plan.

6. Consistency Findings

A. Notification of Consistency Findings

Within ten (10) business days of issuing a Notification of Completeness, the Office will notify the community by certified mail, return receipt requested, whether its plan has been found consistent with the Growth Management Act. This deadline may be extended upon mutual agreement between the Office and the community.

B. Finding of Consistency

The Office shall issue a Finding of Consistency for the comprehensive plan if:

- (1) A Notification of Completeness has been issued; and
- (2) The Future Land Use Plan conforms to Section 3.

C. Finding of Inconsistency

The Office shall issue a Finding of Inconsistency if it finds that the comprehensive plan is not consistent with the Growth Management Act. A Finding of Inconsistency must identify:

- (1) The goal(s) of the Growth Management Act that is (are) not adequately addressed;
- (2) The specific section(s) of this Chapter that is not adequately addressed; and
- (3) Recommended measure(s) needed for a Finding of Consistency.

Within twenty-four (24) months of a Finding of Inconsistency, a community may submit revisions to address the inconsistencies without a new review of the entire plan. After twenty-four (24) months, the plan must be resubmitted in its entirety for state review under this Chapter.

A community may appeal the Office's Finding of Inconsistency to the Director of the Office pursuant to Section 1.7.

7. Appeal of a Finding of Inconsistency

A. Making an Appeal.

A community whose comprehensive plan is found inconsistent with the Growth Management Act may appeal that finding to the Director of the Office, hereinafter referred to as the Director, as follows:

- (1) Any appeal of a Finding of Inconsistency must be made by the municipal officers of the community and must be received no later than twenty (20) business days after such a finding is received.
- (2) Such appeal must be made by filing with the Director a written notice of appeal specifying which portion or portions of the finding is being appealed, and on what grounds, in accordance with Section 1.7(B).

B. Grounds for Appeal

The grounds for an appeal are limited to and must specifically address one or more of the following:

- (1) errors of fact made during the review;
- (2) failure to apply and follow the process and criteria of this Chapter or the Act; or
- (3) arbitrary or capricious decision.

C. Procedure on Appeal

The Director may delegate the appeal to another senior staff person outside of the Office's Land Use Team who was not involved in the consistency review; hereinafter referred to as the Designee.

Upon being notified of an appeal, the Land Use Team Director shall transmit to the Director or Designee all of the papers constituting the record of the decision being appealed.

In considering an appeal, the Director or Designee shall:

- (1) examine relevant portions of the comprehensive plan submission, the relevant requirements of the Act and this Chapter, and the Finding of Inconsistency by the Land Use Team;
- (2) determine, on the basis of the entire record presented, whether the Land Use Team followed the required process and reasonably interpreted the facts to reach the conclusion(s) upon which the Finding of Inconsistency under appeal was based; and
- (3) determine whether there are grounds for the appeal of the Finding of Inconsistency pursuant to Section 1.7(B).

D. Decisions of the Director and Appeals to Superior Court

(1) Remand

If the Director or Designee finds, based on the record presented, that there are ground(s) for appeal under Section 1.7(B), the Director or Designee shall remand with recommendation(s) all or a portion of the finding to Land Use Team Director for reconsideration. The decision of the Director or Designee to remand is not final agency action by the Office and is not appealable to Superior Court.

In the case of such a remand, the Land Use Team Director shall reconsider the original finding and issue a new finding based on the recommendation(s) of the Director or Designee within ten (10) business days. The Office will notify the community of the new consistency finding by certified mail, return receipt requested. The new consistency finding constitutes final agency action.

(2) Decision finding no grounds for appeal

If the Director or Designee finds no grounds for appeal, he/she will issue a notice of decision so stating. The Office will notify the community of the new consistency finding by certified mail, return receipt requested. The notice of decision finding no grounds for appeal constitutes final agency action.

(3) Notice of right to appeal to Superior Court

The Office's new finding or the Director's notice of decision finding no grounds for appeal must include an explanation of the community's right to judicial review of final agency action under 5 MRSA §11001 et seq.

8. Duration of Consistency Findings

A Finding of Consistency under this Chapter is deemed valid for twelve (12) years from the date of issue. A Finding of Consistency issued under Chapter 202 is deemed valid until January 1, 2012 or twelve (12) years from the date of issue, whichever is later. An expired Finding of Consistency does not automatically make a plan inconsistent with the Act and this Chapter.

9. Review of Amendments to Approved Comprehensive Plans

If a community proposes or adopts amendments to a comprehensive plan that previously has been found consistent with the Act, the community may submit the amendment(s) for review to determine if the changes affect the consistency finding. The Office will review the submitted amendments under the process and criteria of this Chapter in the most expedient manner practicable commensurate with the scope of the amendments and issue a finding as outlined in Section 1.6.

Communities need not submit amendments that do not affect the substance of the plan, such as typographical or grammar corrections. Such nonsubstantive corrections do not affect the consistency status of a community's comprehensive plan. If an amendment includes changes to a Future Land Use Plan, then the Office will review the amendment to ensure that the amendment meets the requirements for a Future Land Use Plan set forth in Section 3. If an amendment does not include changes to a Future Land Use Plan, then the Office will review the amendment to ensure that the plan contains the state goal, analyses, condition and trend data, policies, and strategies for each of the required topic areas in Section 4.

A Finding of Consistency for amendments does not reset the duration of the original plan consistency finding for the purposes of Section 1.8.

[NOTE: Substantive changes to policies or strategies proposed to be adopted as amendments to a consistent comprehensive plan, especially changes within the Future Land Use Plan section, may result in a judicial declaration invalidating a Finding of Consistency.]

SECTION 2. REQUIRED ELEMENTS

1. Vision Statement

The plan must include a vision statement that summarizes the community's desired future community character in terms of economic development, natural and cultural resource conservation, transportation systems, land use patterns and its role in the region.

2. Public Participation Summary

The plan must include a summary of the public participation process used by the planning committee in developing the plan pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4324. The summary must indicate how information gathered during the public process was used to guide the plan's vision statement, analyses, policies and strategies.

3. Regional Coordination Program

Pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4326(4), a regional coordination program must be pursued with other communities (or the Land Use Regulatory Commission (LURC) if the community abuts land under LURC jurisdiction) to manage shared resources and facilities, including but not limited to lakes, rivers, aquifers, and transportation facilities. The plan must identify any shared resources and facilities, describe any conflicts with neighboring communities' policies and strategies pertaining to shared resources and facilities and describe what approaches the community will take to coordinate management of shared resources and facilities. In addition, the plan must include a summary of regional coordination efforts from all applicable topic areas.

4. Future Land Use Plan

The plan must include a Future Land Use Plan that meets the requirements set forth in Section 3. The Future Land Use Plan will be the focus of the Office's in-depth review for consistency with the Act.

5. Topic Area Components

In order to be found consistent with the Growth Management Act, the plan must contain the state goal, analyses, condition and trend data, policies, and strategies for each of the required topic areas in Section 4. These minimum requirements in no way limit a community from expanding its plan to include additional information, analyses, policies, and strategies.

A. State Goals

The plan must indicate the state goal or goals relevant to each topic area as identified in Section 4. Local goals may be added but are not required.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

The plan must identify the key issues facing the community using the series of questions for each of the topic areas in Section 4. These questions get to the heart of the issues a community must

plan for to address the state goals. A community must address each of these questions in its plan's narrative, unless determined not to be applicable per Section 2.6.

C. Conditions and Trends

To provide a basis for the analyses of key issues, the plan must include sufficient data necessary to identify current conditions and future trends for each of the topic areas in Section 4. Some of the data requirements will not be applicable in a given community and therefore will not be required in accordance with Section 2.6. Much of the data will be provided by state agencies. Some data are only available from local sources. All data should be verified locally, if possible.

Data provided by state agencies for each of the topic areas are compiled into state data sets provided by the Office upon request by a community, or regional council on behalf of a community. If a community or regional council has requested a state data set and not received it within eight months of the request, then those state data components and associated analyses are not required for a Finding of Consistency.

Data included in state data sets are considered the most current data available and will be considered current for consistency reviews for three (3) years. Communities taking longer than three years to prepare a plan should request a new state data set from the Office and update the plan accordingly prior to submitting it to the Office for a consistency review.

D. Policies

The minimum required policies for each topic area in Section 4 must be incorporated into a plan for it to be found consistent with the Growth Management Act. The language may be altered to better suit a community, but the specific intent of the minimum policy must remain. Altered policies must reflect the desired future direction of the community as stated in the community's vision statement.

E. Strategies

The strategies describe what actions the community will take to carry out its policies. The plan must include all of the minimum required strategies identified in Section 4 for each topic area.

Alternative strategies may be substituted for those included in this Chapter provided a rationale for the alternative strategy is detailed in the Self-Assessment Checklist. Alternative strategies will be considered by the Office to determine if they, in combination with the other strategies in the plan, address the goals of the Act.

6. Applicability

If a required element is determined by the community to not be applicable, an explanation for that determination must be provided on the Self-Assessment Checklist. Some items, such as the applicability of marine resources in inland communities, will require only a simple explanation or notation. Other items will require more detailed explanation. This provision is not intended to allow communities to circumvent the requirements for consistency with the Act. During its review of a comprehensive plan, the Office will make a final decision on the applicability of a required element by considering the following criteria:

- A. Does the information provided in the plan support the community's explanation of non-applicability?

- B. Does the exclusion of the required element create a gap in the information needed to support the Future Land Use Plan?

[NOTE: It is strongly recommended that a community coordinate with the Office well in advance of submission for review to discuss the applicability of required elements.]

7. Plan Implementation

The plan must include a separate section that prioritizes how implementation strategies will be carried out pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4326(3). The plan must identify the responsible party and anticipated timeline for each strategy in the plan.

8. Evaluation

The plan must include an outline describing how the community will periodically (at least every five years) evaluate the following:

- A. The degree to which future land use plan strategies have been implemented;
- B. Percent of municipal growth-related capital investments in growth areas;
- C. Location and amount of new development in relation to community's designated growth areas, rural areas, and critical resource areas
- D. Amount of critical resource areas protected through acquisition, easements, or other measures.

If the community's evaluation concludes that portions of the current plan and/or its implementation are not effective, the community is encouraged to propose changes as needed.

9. Self-Assessment Checklist

A plan submitted to the Office for review must include a completed Self-Assessment Checklist (see Appendix A) which confirms that each of the elements required by this Chapter are included in the plan.

10. Certification

A plan submitted for review under this Chapter must include the original signature(s) of the municipal officer(s) of the community under the following certification:

I (we) certify that this comprehensive plan was prepared with the intent of complying with the Growth Management Act (30 MRSA §4312 et seq.), that it includes all of the applicable required elements of the Maine Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule (07-105 CMR 208), and that it is true and accurate.

SECTION 3. FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

1. State Goal

To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

2. Future Land Use Plan Overview

The plan must include a Future Land Use Plan that is consistent with the community's vision and other policies in the plan. The Future Land Use Plan brings together plan elements that affect land use. It is intended to synthesize these elements into a cohesive guide to realizing the community's vision, including the development of land use regulations/ordinances. Use the analysis of conditions and trends data in Section 4, in conjunction with the vision statement, to develop the community's Future Land Use Plan.

The Future Land Use Plan divides the community into geographical areas identified as either most suitable for growth or most suitable for rural uses unless exempted under 30-A MRSA §4326(3-A), more fully described below. The Future Land Use Plan also identifies critical resource areas within the community. The Future Land Use Plan will be the focus of the Office review for consistency with the Act.

3. Review Criteria for Future Land Use Plan Designations

A. Growth Areas

A community's Future Land Use Plan must identify a growth area or areas. The designation of growth areas is intended to ensure that planned growth and development and related infrastructure are directed to areas most suitable for such growth and development. Land areas designated as **growth area** must be consistent with the following provisions.

- (1) The Future Land Use Plan must designate as **growth area** those lands into which the community intends to direct a minimum of 75% of its dollars for municipal growth-related capital investments made during the planning period.
- (2) Built-out or developed areas that may not have capacity for further growth but require maintenance, replacement, or additional capital investment to support existing or infill development must also be designated as growth areas.
- (3) Growth areas must be limited to land areas that are physically suitable for development or redevelopment. Growth areas may include land areas that are physically unsuitable for development or redevelopment, such as a river, stream, floodplain, small natural hazard area, small lake or aquifer, or small critical natural resource, if the plan addresses how these areas will be protected to the greatest extent practicable or as prescribed by law.
- (4) Growth areas, to the greatest extent practicable, must be limited to an amount of land area and a configuration to encourage compact, efficient development patterns (including mixed uses) and discourage development sprawl and strip development.
- (5) Growth areas along arterials and mobility corridors must be configured to avoid strip development and promote nodes or clusters of development.

B. Growth Area Exemptions

In some communities, conditions may make the identification of specific areas for residential, institutional, commercial, and/or industrial growth inappropriate. These conditions, as described in 30-A MRSA §4326(3-A) and Section 3.5 of this Chapter, include:

- (1) Severe physical limitations;
- (2) Minimal or no growth; or
- (3) The lack of a village or densely populated area.

Communities with one or more of these conditions may develop a Future Land Use Plan that does not identify growth areas for residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial growth pursuant to the criteria identified in Section 3.5. If a growth area exemption is proposed, the plan's description of existing trends and conditions must support the exemption request. Communities with town-wide growth caps or rate-of-growth ordinances are not eligible for a growth area exemption.

C. Shared Growth Areas

Pursuant to and in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4325, communities may enter into an interlocal agreement with one or more neighboring communities to designate regional growth areas for anticipated residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial growth and/or related services or infrastructure.

D. Transitional Areas

The Future Land Use Plan may designate as **transitional area** those land areas which the community identifies as suitable for a share of projected residential, institutional, commercial or industrial development but that is neither intended to accept the amount or density of development appropriate for a growth area nor intended to provide the level of protection for rural resources afforded in a rural area or critical rural area. Designated transitional areas are intended to provide for limited suburban or rural residential development opportunities. Land areas designated as **transitional area** must be consistent with the following provisions:

- (1) Transitional areas may not be defined as growth areas for the purposes of state growth related capital investment pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4301 (5-B).
- (2) Development standards in transitional areas must limit strip development along roads through access management, minimum frontage requirements, and other techniques.
- (3) Transitional areas may not include significant contiguous areas of working farms, wood lots, properties in state tree growth and farm and open space tax programs, prime agricultural and forestry soils, unfragmented habitat, or marine resources identified in the conditions and trends in Sections 4.6, 4.8, and 4.10.
- (4) Transitional areas must be compatible with designations in adjacent communities or provide buffers or transitions to avoid land use conflicts with neighboring communities.

E. Rural Areas

The community's Future Land Use Plan must identify a **rural area or areas**. The designation of **rural areas** is intended to identify areas deserving of some level of regulatory protection from unrestricted development for purposes that may include, but are not limited to, supporting agriculture, forestry, mining, open space, wildlife habitat, fisheries habitat and scenic lands, and away from which most development projected over ten (10) years is diverted.

A community's Future Land Use Plan must designate as rural area or areas any portion of the community consistent with the following provisions:

- (1) Rural areas must include agricultural, forest, open space, and coastal lands important to the local or regional natural resource-based economy, including:
 - a. working farms, wood lots, and properties enrolled in current-use tax programs related to forestry, farming or open space;
 - b. large, unfragmented, undeveloped areas of prime agricultural soils;
 - c. important areas for nature-based tourism and outdoor recreation; and
 - d. unfragmented habitat.
- (2) The Future Land Use Plan must identify current and proposed mechanisms, both regulatory and non-regulatory, to ensure that the level and type of development in rural areas is compatible with the defined rural character and does not encourage strip development along roads.
- (3) Rural areas may not include land areas where the community actively encourages new residential, institutional, or commercial development.
- (4) Rural areas must be compatible with designations in adjacent communities or provide buffers or transitions to avoid land use conflicts with neighboring communities.

F. Critical Resource Areas

The Future Land Use Plan must identify and designate *critical resource areas* as defined in this Chapter. Land areas designated as *critical resource area* must be consistent with the following provisions:

- (1) Critical resource areas are those areas in a community most vulnerable to impacts from development.
- (2) The Future Land Use Plan must identify current and proposed mechanisms, both regulatory and non-regulatory, to ensure that critical resource areas are, to the greatest extent practicable, protected from the impacts of development.
- (3) Critical resource areas must be compatible with designations in adjacent communities or provide buffers or transitions to avoid land use conflicts with neighboring communities.

4. Required Elements for the Future Land Use Plan

A. Analysis and Key Issues

- (1) How does the Future Land Use Plan align and/or conflict with the community's vision statement?
- (2) How is the configuration of the growth areas shaped by natural opportunities and/or constraints (i.e. the physical suitability or unsuitability of land for development)? The location of public facilities? The transportation network?
- (3) How does the Future Land Use Plan relate to existing regional economic, housing, transportation and natural resource plans? How does the Future Land Use Plan relate to recent development trends?

- (4) Are most municipal capital investments currently directed toward growth areas? Why or why not?
- (5) How can critical resource areas be effectively protected from future development impacts?

B. Components

The Future Land Use Plan must include:

- (1) A map or maps showing the following land use areas and any smaller land use districts within them: Growth (unless exempted), Rural, Critical Resource, and Transition (if proposed).
- (2) A narrative description of each land use area including:
 - a. The area's relationship to the community's vision;
 - b. The names of any smaller land use districts within the area;
 - c. The area's natural opportunities and/or constraints;
 - d. The area's transportation system;
 - e. The types and intensity of proposed land uses, including the range of residential densities;
 - f. The area's proximity to existing and proposed public facilities and services;
 - g. The compatibility or incompatibility of proposed uses to current uses within and around the area along with any special development considerations (e.g. need for additional buffers, architectural design standards, etc.); and
 - h. Any anticipated major municipal capital investments needed to support the proposed land uses.
- (3) A summary of the key regulatory and non-regulatory approaches, including investment policies and strategies, the community will use to implement its Future Land Use Plan.

C. Policies

Minimum policies to address state goals:

- (1) To coordinate the community's land use strategies with other local and regional land use planning efforts.
- (2) To support the locations, types, scales, and intensities of land uses the community desires as stated in its vision.
- (3) To support the level of financial commitment necessary to provide needed infrastructure in growth areas.
- (4) To establish efficient permitting procedures, especially in growth areas.
- (5) To protect critical resource areas from the impacts of development.

D. Strategies

In addition to the strategies required below, include any strategies as necessary to support the establishment of any rate of growth or impact fee ordinances proposed. These may include strategies found in other sections of the plan.

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Assign responsibility for implementing the Future Land Use Plan to the appropriate committee, board or municipal official.
- (2) Using the descriptions provided in the Future Land Use Plan narrative, enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to:
 - a. Clearly define the desired scale, intensity, and location of future development;
 - b. Establish fair and efficient permitting procedures and appropriate fees, and streamline permitting procedures in growth areas; and
 - c. Clearly define protective measures for critical resource areas.
- (3) Include in the Capital Investment Plan anticipated municipal capital investments needed to support proposed land uses.
- (4) Meet with neighboring communities to coordinate land use designations and regulatory and non-regulatory strategies.
- (5) Provide the code enforcement officer with the tools, training, and support necessary to enforce land use regulations, and ensure that the Code Enforcement Officer is certified in accordance with 30-A MRSA §4451.
- (6) Track new development in the community by type and location.
- (7) Periodically (at least every five years) evaluate implementation of the plan in accordance with Section 2.8.

5. Criteria for Growth Area Exemptions

A. Severe Physical Limitations

The Future Land Use Plan need not identify growth areas if the plan demonstrates that it is not possible to accommodate future residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial growth because of severe physical limitations, including, without limitation, the lack of adequate water supply and sewage disposal services, very shallow soils, or limitations imposed by critical natural resources.

To be considered for a growth area exemption because of severe physical limitations, the Future Land Use Plan must clearly indicate the physical limitation and the rationale for the exemption, based on one or more of the following three criteria:

- (1) **Water delivery and sewage disposal limitations.** To qualify under this criterion, the Future Land Use Plan shall include descriptions of existing water delivery system(s) and sewage disposal system(s), including an analysis of the current capacity of the system(s) and potential for service expansion or introduction of such services. This discussion must also include descriptions and maps of aquifers in the planning area, and a description of how these aquifers relate to future capacity to serve as water supply.
- (2) **Soils.** Description of soils types and conditions (available from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Maine Geological Survey), including the presence of ledge or steep slopes. This discussion must also describe the limitations of these soils related to wastewater disposal [pursuant to Maine Subsurface Wastewater Disposal regulations (10-144 CMR 241)], and describe how these soil limitations make designation of any growth areas in the community with densities in the range of 20,000 to 80,000 square feet impractical.

[Note: The 20,000 square feet/lot density is the minimum allowable lot size where sewer facilities are not available as defined by the Maine State Plumbing Code. A community may establish its own minimum standard lot size in excess of this figure.]

- (3) **Critical natural resources.** Description of critical natural resources, with accompanying map(s) detailing the location of these resources. Based on this information, this discussion must also include a description of the constraints placed on future development by critical natural resources, alone or in conjunction with other physical limitations.

B. Minimal or No Growth

The Future Land Use Plan is not required to identify growth areas for residential, institutional, commercial or industrial growth if it demonstrates that the community or region has experienced minimal or no residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development over the past decade and this condition is expected to continue over the planning period. Communities that have adopted town-wide growth caps or rate-of-growth ordinances are not eligible for a growth area exemption.

For consideration of a growth area exemption because of minimal residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development, the Future Land Use Plan must clearly indicate the rationale for the exemption according to the type of exemption, as described below:

- (1) **Residential growth area exemption.** For both the preceding 10-year period and the projected planning period, the Future Land Use Plan must include: the community's population; the number of households; and the average household size. Based on this information, the Future Land Use Plan must demonstrate that the community has experienced minimal or no residential development as defined in Section 1.2(Z) and expects such a trend to continue.
- (2) **Commercial/Institutional growth area exemption.** The Future Land Use Plan must include: information on the type and amount (square footage) of institutional or commercial development that occurred in the community during the preceding 10-year period, and a discussion of the type and amount of institutional or commercial development that is likely during the projected planning period. Based on this information, the Future Land Use Plan must demonstrate that the community has experienced minimal or no commercial/institutional growth, as defined in Section 1.2(X), and expects such trends to continue.
- (3) **Industrial growth area exemption.** The Future Land Use Plan must include: information on the type and amount (square footage) of industrial development that occurred in the community during the preceding 10-year period, and a discussion of what type and amount of industrial development is likely during the projected planning period. Based on this information, the Future Land Use Plan must demonstrate that the community has experienced minimal or no industrial development, as defined in Section 1.2(Y), and expects such a trend to continue.

C. Lack of a Village or Densely Populated Area

The Future Land Use Plan is not required to identify growth areas for residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial growth anywhere in the community if it demonstrates that the community or region growth patterns do not include a village center or other densely populated area, and that no such areas are expected over the planning period.

For consideration of a growth area exemption because of the absence of a village or densely populated area, the Future Land Use Plan must discuss the manner in which the community

intends to remain a rural community. As part of this discussion, the Future Land Use Plan must describe the rationale for the exemption, and must meet the following three criteria:

- (1) Except for shoreland zones, the community has no land areas with residential dwelling densities greater than one unit per two acres within an area encompassed by any 500-foot radius; and
- (2) The community has no land areas with village characteristics, such as a compact mix of commercial, civic, and residential development or a mix of housing types; and
- (3) The community has no municipal or quasi-public water or wastewater systems.

SECTION 4. REQUIRED TOPIC AREAS

1. Population and Demographics

A. State Goals

None required.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.1(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Is the rate of population change expected to continue as in the past, or to slow down or speed up? What are the implications of this change?
- (2) Which demographic groups are the fastest growing and which are in decline?
- (3) What will be the likely demand for housing and municipal and school services to accommodate the change in population and demographics, both as a result of overall change and as a result of change among different age groups?
- (4) If most of the population growth is the result of newcomers, what can the community do to foster shared outlooks?
- (5) If your community has a significant seasonal population, is the nature of that population changing? What is the community's relationship to and dependence on seasonal visitors?
- (6) If your community is a service center or has a major employer, what additional effort does it have to make to serve a daytime population that is larger than its resident population?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Population and Demographic Data Set (including relevant local, regional, and statewide data) prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.
- (2) Information on natural population change (births and deaths).
- (3) Significance and role of seasonal population and anticipated trends (as applicable).

D. Policies

None required.

E. Strategies

None required.

2. Economy

A. State Goals

- (1) Plan for, finance, and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

- (2) Promote an economic climate that increases job opportunities and overall economic well-being.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.2(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Where does the local population work and how does the community fit into the economic region (labor market area)?
- (2) Who are the major employers in the region and what is their outlook for the future?
- (3) Is the economy experiencing significant change, and how does this, or might this, affect the local population, employment, and municipal tax base?
- (4) What are the community's priorities for economic development? Are these priorities reflected in regional economic development plans?
- (5) If there is a traditional downtown in the community, is it deteriorating or thriving? How is this affecting the community?
- (6) Are natural resource-based industries (including fishing, farming, or forestry) important in the community and, if so, are they growing or declining? What steps has the community taken to support these industries?
- (7) Is tourism an important part of the local economy? If so, does the community want to foster this industry and what steps can it take to strengthen tourism?
- (8) What role do/should home occupations play in the community, if any?
- (9) Are there appropriate areas within the community for industrial or commercial development? If so, are performance standards necessary to assure that industrial and commercial development is compatible with the surrounding land uses and landscape?
- (10) What types of public facilities, including sewer, water, broadband access or three-phase power, are needed to support the projected location, type, and amount of economic activity, and what are the issues involved in providing them?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Economic Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Office or its designee.
- (2) A brief historical perspective on how and why the current economy of the community and region developed.
- (3) A list of local and regional economic development plans developed over the past five years, which include the community.
- (4) A description of the major employers in the community and labor market area.
- (5) A description of retail stores by type and how the composition has changed over past five or ten years.
- (6) A description of any economic development incentive districts, such as tax increment financing districts or Pine Tree Zones, in the community.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To support the type of economic development activity the community desires, reflecting the community's role in the region.
- (2) To make a financial commitment, if necessary, to support desired economic development, including needed public improvements.
- (3) To coordinate with regional development corporations and surrounding towns as necessary to support desired economic development.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) If appropriate, assign responsibility and provide financial support for economic development activities to the proper entity (e.g., a local economic development committee, a local representative to a regional economic development organization, the community's economic development director, a regional economic development initiative, or other).
- (2) Enact or amend local ordinances, if appropriate, to reflect the desired scale, design, intensity, and location of future economic development.
- (3) Develop and adopt incentives suitable for the types and locations of economic development desired in the community.
- (4) If public investments are foreseen as required, identify the mechanisms to be considered to finance them (local tax dollars, creating a tax increment financing district, a Community Development Block Grant or other grants, bonding, impact fees, etc.)
- (5) Initiate participation in or continue to participate in any regional economic development efforts.

3. Housing

A. State Goal

To encourage and promote affordable, decent housing opportunities for all Maine citizens.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.3(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) How many additional housing units, including rental units, will be necessary to accommodate projected population and demographic changes during the planning period?
- (2) Is housing, including rental housing, affordable to those earning the median income in the region? Is housing affordable to those earning 80% of the median income? If not, evaluate local and regional efforts to address issue.
- (3) Are seasonal homes being converted to year-round use or vice-versa? What impact does this have on the community?
- (4) Will additional senior or assisted living housing be necessary to meet projected needs for the community? Will these needs be met locally or regionally?
- (5) Are there other major housing issues in the community, such as substandard housing?

- (6) How do existing local regulations encourage or discourage the development of affordable housing?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Housing Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Maine State Housing Authority, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) Information on existing regional affordable housing coalitions or similar efforts.
- (3) A summary of local regulations that affect the development of affordable housing.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To encourage and promote adequate workforce housing to support the community's and region's economic development.
- (2) To ensure that land use controls encourage the development of quality affordable housing, including rental housing.
- (3) To seek to achieve at least 10% of all housing built or placed during the next decade be affordable.
- (4) To encourage and support the efforts of the regional housing coalitions in addressing affordable and workforce housing needs.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Enact or amend growth area land use regulations to increase density, decrease lot size, setbacks and road widths, or provide incentives such as density bonuses, to make housing less expensive to develop.
- (2) Allow the addition of at least one accessory apartment per dwelling unit in growth areas, subject to site suitability.
- (3) Create or continue to support a community affordable housing committee and/or regional affordable housing coalition.
- (4) Designate a location(s) in growth areas where mobile home parks are allowed pursuant to 30-A MRSA §4358(3)(M).

4. Transportation

A. State Goal and the Sensible Transportation Policy Act

- (1) To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.
- (2) Sensible Transportation Policy Act

The Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73) requires that the State Planning Office and the Maine Department of Transportation establish linkage between that Act and the Growth Management Act. Therefore, Section 4.4, the transportation section of a comprehensive plan,

must be developed in accordance with the Sensible Transportation Policy Act in order to be consistent with the Growth Management Act.

If a community's transportation plan has been approved by the Maine Department of Transportation (hereafter MaineDOT) as consistent with the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73), and the approved plan is incorporated into the community's comprehensive plan, then the transportation section is deemed to be consistent with this Chapter.

Absent such approval, the following analyses, condition and trend data, policies, and strategies are required. Regional and state transportation plans must be consulted in preparing this section.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.4(C) to answer the following questions.

(1) Roads, Bridges, Sidewalks, and Bicycle Routes

- a. What are the concerns for transportation system safety and efficiency in the community and region? What, if any, plans exist to address these concerns, which can involve:
 - i. Safety;
 - ii. Traffic speed;
 - iii. Congestion and travel delay;
 - iv. Travel volume and type;
 - v. Traffic problems caused by such things as road and driveway locations and design, road maintenance needs, traffic control devices, growth patterns, and lack of transportation options;
 - vi. Lack of transportation links between neighborhoods, schools, recreation, shopping, and public gathering areas;
 - vii. Closed or posted bridges or roads;
 - viii. Pedestrian and bicycling safety; and
 - ix. Light pollution
- b. What conflicts are caused by multiple road uses, such as a major state or U.S. route that passes through the community or its downtown and serves as a local service road as well?
- c. Upon review of state and regional transportation plans, what are their impacts on your current and future community plans? What actions can the community take to address identified impacts?
- d. How do the community's land use regulations mesh with the MaineDOT, regional, and local objectives for transportation system facilities in the community? If growth areas are located on arterial highways, how will growth in these areas affect the ability of the arterial to safely and efficiently move traffic?
- e. What is the community's schedule for regular investments in road maintenance and improvement? How are MaineDOT Urban-Rural Initiative Program (URIP) funds used to off-set municipal road improvement costs?

- f. What concerns does your community have regarding its policies and standards for design, construction, and maintenance of public and private local roads and bridges?

(2) Parking

- a. What are the parking issues in the community?
- b. Do local parking standards promote development in desired areas or do they drive it to outlying areas?
- c. How do local ordinances consider safety related to parking lot layout and circulation for vehicles, pedestrians and all other users?
- d. What community investments are needed to expand or improve parking?

(3) Other Modes of Transportation:

- a. What transit services are available to meet the current and future needs of community residents? If transit services are not adequate, how will the community address the needs?
- b. If the community hosts a major transportation terminal, such as an airport, rail, or ferry terminal, how does it connect to other transportation systems?
- c. If the community hosts any public airports, what coordination has been undertaken to ensure that required airspace is protected now and in the future? How does the community coordinate with the owner(s) of private airports?

(4) Coastal Communities only:

- a. What land-side and water-side transportation facilities are needed?
- b. How does the community protect access to facilities for island travelers, currently and in the future?
- c. How do the community's land use regulations mesh with MaineDOT, regional, and local objectives for marine transportation facilities?

(5) Environmental and Cultural Considerations:

- a. What, if any, environmental degradation caused by state or local transportation facilities or operations (e.g. wildlife mortality, habitat fragmentation, erosion, groundwater contamination, non-point source pollution) is occurring?
- b. What are the community's objectives for preserving or protecting important identified or designated scenic, historic, or cultural resources adjacent to transportation facilities?
- c. How does the community address any transportation-related noise concerns?
- d. What steps can the community take to encourage development to occur in a manner that minimizes transportation-related environmental impacts such as habitat fragmentation and/or vehicular CO₂ emissions?

(6) Land Use:

- a. How do existing and proposed major transportation facilities complement the community's vision?
- b. How do local land use plans and decisions affect safety, congestion, mobility, efficiency, and interconnectivity of the transportation system?

- c. How do existing land uses and development trends support or inhibit cost effective passenger transportation systems and the efficient use of freight rail systems?
- d. Does the community have in place, or does it need to put into place, access management or traffic permitting measures? How do these measures correlate with MaineDOT's access management program and regulations for traffic permitting of large development?
- e. How do the community's local road design standards support the type of village, suburban or rural land use patterns the town wants?
- f. Do planned or recently built subdivision roads (residential or commercial) simply dead-end or do they allow for expansion to adjacent land and encourage the creation of a network of local streets? Where dead-ends are unavoidable, are mechanisms in place to encourage shorter dead-ends resulting in compact and efficient subdivision designs?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Transportation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Transportation, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) Highways, Bridges, Sidewalks, and Bicycle Routes:
 - a. Location and overall condition of roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bicycle facilities, including any identified deficiencies or concerns.
 - b. Identify potential off-road connections that would provide bicycle and pedestrian connections to neighborhoods, schools, waterfronts and other activity centers.
 - c. Identify major traffic (including pedestrian) generators, such as schools, large businesses, public gathering areas/activities, etc. and related hours of their operations.
 - d. Identify policies and standards for the design, construction and maintenance of public and private roads. Identify the location of private roads and assess their potential to become public roads.
- (3) Parking:
 - a. List and locate municipal parking areas including size, condition, and usage.
- (4) Other Modes of Transportation:
 - a. List and locate all airports within or adjacent to the community and describe applicable airport zoning and airspace protection ordinances in place.
 - b. Identify inter-local, fixed route, commuter, and demand response bus or van services, including private or public operator information and local government involvement.
- (5) Coastal Communities only:
 - a. Location of current and potential seaport terminals. Identify whether seaport terminal is of local, regional, or state significance, its ownership/management and use (type and quantity/frequency of goods shipped in or out). List land-side and water-side facilities associated with port.

- b. Identify public ferry service and private boat transportation support facilities (may be covered under Marine Resources with cross reference) including related water-side (docks/piers/wharves) and land-side (parking) facilities.

(6) Environmental and Cultural Considerations:

- a. Location of evacuation routes identified in an emergency response plan, if applicable.
- b. Identify areas with transportation related noise concerns.
- c. Identify areas where inappropriate lighting affects transportation safety.
- d. Identify and describe scenic, historic, or cultural resources within or adjacent to transportation facilities that the community wants to protect, such as street trees, covered bridges, etc.
- e. Known locations with opportunities to restore habitat connections disrupted by a transportation facility owned and maintained by the community.

(7) Land Use:

- a. Identify current local land use management strategies (such as access management, zoning, density, and minimum lot size standards) that enhance or detract from the safety and efficiency of the transportation system (including highway, air, bus, bike, pedestrian, marine, and rail services.)

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To prioritize community and regional needs associated with safe, efficient, and optimal use of transportation systems.
- (2) To safely and efficiently preserve or improve the transportation system.
- (3) To promote public health, protect natural and cultural resources, and enhance livability by managing land use in ways that maximize the efficiency of the transportation system and minimize increases in vehicle miles traveled.
- (4) To meet the diverse transportation needs of residents (including children, the elderly and disabled) and through travelers by providing a safe, efficient, and adequate transportation network for all types of users (motor vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists).
- (5) To promote fiscal prudence by maximizing the efficiency of the state or state-aid highway network.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Develop or continue to update a prioritized ten-year improvement, maintenance, and repair plan for local/regional transportation system facilities that reflects community, regional, and state objectives.
- (2) Initiate or actively participate in regional and state transportation and land use planning efforts.
- (3) Enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to be consistent with local, regional, and state transportation policies identified in this plan.
- (4) Enact or amend local ordinances as appropriate to address or avoid conflicts with:

- a. Policy objectives of the Sensible Transportation Policy Act (23 MRSA §73);
 - b. State access management regulations pursuant to 23 MRSA §704; and
 - c. State traffic permitting regulations for large developments pursuant to 23 MRSA §704-A.
- (5) Enact or amend ordinance standards for subdivisions and for public and private roads as appropriate to foster transportation-efficient growth patterns and provide for future street and transit connections.
 - (6) Work with the MaineDOT as appropriate to address deficiencies in the system or conflicts between local, regional, and state priorities for the local transportation system.

5. Recreation

A. State Goal

To promote and protect the availability of outdoor recreation opportunities for all Maine citizens, including access to surface waters.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.5(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Will existing recreational facilities and programs in the community and region accommodate projected growth or changes in age groups in your community?
- (2) Is there a need for certain types of services or facilities or to upgrade or enlarge present facilities to either add capacity or make them more usable?
- (3) Are important tracts of open space commonly used for recreation publicly-owned or otherwise permanently conserved?
- (4) Does the community have a mechanism, such as an open space fund or partnership with a land trust, to acquire important open spaces and access sites, either outright or through conservation easements?
- (5) Does the public have access to each of the community's significant water bodies? Is the type of access compatible with the protection of public drinking water sources?
- (6) Are recreational trails in the community adequately maintained? Are there use conflicts on these trails?
- (7) Is traditional access to private lands being restricted?

C. Condition and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Recreation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Conservation, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) A description of important public and private active recreation programs, land and water areas (including hunting and fishing areas), and facilities in the community and region, including regional recreational opportunities as appropriate, and identification of unmet needs.

- (3) An inventory of any fresh or salt water bodies in the community determined locally to have inadequate public access.
- (4) A description of trail systems, trail management organizations, and conservation organizations that provide trails for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiling, skiing, mountain biking, or hiking. Include mapped information as available.
- (5) A map or list of important publicly-used open spaces and their associated facilities, such as parking and toilet facilities.
- (6) A list of local and regional land trusts in the area.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To maintain/upgrade existing recreational facilities as necessary to meet current and future needs.
- (2) To preserve open space for recreational use as appropriate.
- (3) To seek to achieve or continue to maintain at least one major point of public access to major water bodies for boating, fishing, and swimming, and work with nearby property owners to address concerns.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Create a list of recreation needs or develop a recreation plan to meet current and future needs. Assign a committee or town official to explore ways of addressing the identified needs and/or implementing the policies and strategies outlined in the plan.
- (2) Include any capital needs identified for recreation facilities in the Capital Investment Plan.
- (3) Work with public and private partners to extend and maintain a network of trails for motorized and non-motorized uses. Connect with regional trail systems where possible.
- (4) Work with an existing local land trust or other conservation organization to pursue opportunities to protect important open space or recreational land.
- (5) Provide education regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property.

6. Marine Resources (if applicable)

A. State Goal and State Coastal Policies

- (1) To protect the State's marine resources industry, ports and harbors from incompatible development and to promote access to the shore for commercial fishermen and the public.
- (2) For coastal towns, the Growth Management Act requires that a local comprehensive plan address the state coastal management policies (38 MRSA §1801). These are:
 - a. To promote the maintenance, development, and revitalization of the State's ports and harbors for fishing, transportation and recreation;

- b. To manage the marine environment and its related resources to preserve and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of marine communities and habitats, to expand our understanding of the productivity of the Gulf of Maine and coastal waters and to enhance the economic value of the State's renewable marine resources;
- c. To support shoreline management that gives preference to water-dependent uses over other uses, that promotes public access to the shoreline and that considers the cumulative effects of development on coastal resources;
- d. To discourage growth and new development in coastal areas where, because of coastal storms, flooding, landslides or sea-level rise, it is hazardous to human health and safety;
- e. To encourage and support cooperative state and municipal management of coastal resources;
- f. To protect and manage critical habitat and natural areas of state and national significance and maintain the scenic beauty and character of the coast even in areas where development occurs;
- g. To expand the opportunities for outdoor recreation and to encourage appropriate coastal tourist activities and development;
- h. To restore and maintain the quality of our fresh, marine and estuarine waters to allow for the broadest possible diversity of public and private uses; and,
- i. To restore and maintain coastal air quality to protect the health of citizens and visitors and to protect enjoyment of the natural beauty and maritime characteristics of the Maine coast.

[Note: The minimum requirements to address some of these policies are identified in other sections of this Chapter.]

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.6(C) to answer the following questions.

(1) Fishery resources/water quality

- a. Is water quality being monitored on a regular basis?
- b. Is there a local or regional plan in place to identify and eliminate pollution sources?
- c. Has closing of clam or worm flats threatened the shellfishing industry, and are sources of contamination known? Are sources point (direct discharge) or nonpoint sources?
- d. Are fishery resources being properly managed at local and regional levels?

(2) Coastal land use

- a. Are traditional water-dependent uses thriving or in decline? What are the factors affecting these uses? If current trends continue, what will the waterfront look like in 10 years?
- b. Is there reasonable balance between water-dependent and other uses, and between commercial and recreational uses? If there have been recent conversions of uses, have they improved or worsened the balance?
- c. How does local zoning treat land around the harbor? How do the community's coastal land use regulations compare with neighboring communities?

(3) Harbor management

- a. Have arrangements for managing local harbors been effective?
- b. Is there a local or regional harbor or bay management plan? If not, is one needed?
- c. If the harbor is shared with other communities, is there cooperation in management of the harbor?
- d. What are the local dredging needs and how are they addressed?

(4) Coastal access

- a. Is adequate, protected access for commercial fishermen, aquaculturists, and recreational users available? Based on projections, will access, including support facilities such as parking and marine services, be adequate for the future? Are there opportunities for improved access?
- b. Are important points of visual access identified and protected?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Marine Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Marine Resources, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) Coastal Land Use
 - a. A map or description of current land use patterns along the shoreline and near coast area which differentiates water-dependent uses from other uses.
 - b. A summary of current regulatory and non-regulatory provisions influencing land use patterns along the shoreline and near coast area.
- (3) Harbor Management
 - a. A description of any local or regional harbor or bay management plans or planning efforts.
- (4) Coastal Access
 - a. The location of facilities (wharves, boat ramps, pump-out stations, etc.), with a brief description of any regional or local plans to improve facilities.
 - b. A description of or map showing beaches and other access points used by the public with a brief description of their use, capacity, physical condition, and plans to improve, expand, or acquire facilities such as parking or toilets.
 - c. An inventory of significant scenic access points along the shoreline, including current ownership (public/private) and any protection, if any.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve marine habitat and water quality.
- (2) To foster water-dependent land uses and balance them with other complementary land uses.
- (3) To maintain and, where warranted, improve harbor management and facilities.
- (4) To protect, maintain and, where warranted, improve physical and visual public access to the community's marine resources for all appropriate uses including fishing, recreation, and tourism.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Working with local residents and businesses, neighboring communities, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Marine Resources, develop an action plan to protect fishery habitats and identify and eliminate point and non-point source pollution.
- (2) Consistently enforce local shoreland zoning provisions and provide adequate training and resources to the code enforcement officer.
- (3) Develop a plan for addressing any identified needs for additional recreational and commercial access (which includes parking, boat launches, docking space, and swimming access) and their ongoing maintenance. Include necessary public improvements/upgrades in the Capital Investment Plan.
- (4) Encourage owners of marine businesses and industries to participate in clean marina/boatyard programs.
- (5) Provide information about the current use taxation program to owners of waterfront land used to provide access to or support the conduct of commercial fishing activities.
- (6) Implement any local or regional harbor or bay management plans, or work with neighboring communities to create a harbor management plan for shared resources.
- (7) If applicable, provide sufficient funding for and staffing of the harbormaster and/or harbor commission.
- (8) Work with local property owners, land trusts, and others to protect major points of physical and visual access to coastal waters, especially along public ways and in public parks.

7. Water Resources

A. State Goal

To protect the quality and manage the quantity of the State's water resources, including lakes, aquifers, great ponds, estuaries, rivers, and coastal areas.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.7(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Are there point sources (direct discharges) of pollution in the community? If so, is the community taking steps to eliminate them?
- (2) Are there non-point sources of pollution related to development, agriculture, forestry, or other uses that are affecting surface water resources and riparian areas? If so, are existing regulations sufficient to protect these resources?
- (3) Are point and/or non-point sources of pollution threatening groundwater supplies?
- (4) Are public groundwater and surface water supplies and their recharge areas adequately protected? Are any public water supply expansions anticipated? If so, have suitable sources been identified and protected?

- (5) What non-regulatory measures can the community take to protect or enhance water quality? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups that promote water resource protection?
- (6) Do local road construction and maintenance practices and standards adequately protect water resources? Do public works crews and contractors use best management practices in daily operations (e.g. salt/sand pile maintenance, culvert replacement street sweeping, public works garage operations)?
- (7) Are floodplains adequately identified and protected? Does the community participate in the National Flood Insurance Program? If not, should it? If so, is the floodplain management ordinance up to date and consistently enforced?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Water Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) A description of each lake, pond, river, and stream including:
 - a. ecological, economic, and recreational values;
 - b. current watershed land uses;
 - c. threats to water quality or quantity;
 - d. documented water quality and/or invasive species problems.
- (3) A list of water resource advocacy groups active in the community.
- (4) A summary of past and present activities to monitor, assess, and/or improve water quality, mitigate sources of pollution, and control or prevent the spread of invasive species.
- (5) A description of the location and nature of significant threats to drinking water supplies.
- (6) A summary of existing lake, pond, river, stream, and drinking water protection and preservation measures, including local ordinances.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To protect current and potential drinking water sources.
- (2) To protect significant surface water resources from pollution and improve water quality where needed.
- (3) To protect water resources in growth areas while promoting more intensive development in those areas.
- (4) To minimize pollution discharges through the upgrade of existing public sewer systems and wastewater treatment facilities.
- (5) To cooperate with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups to protect water resources.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies to meet state goals:

- (1) Amend local land use ordinances as applicable to incorporate stormwater runoff performance standards consistent with:
 - a. Maine Stormwater Management Law and Maine Stormwater regulations (Title 38 MRSA §420-D and 06-096 CMR 500 and 502).
 - b. Maine Department of Environmental Protection's allocations for allowable levels of phosphorus in lake/pond watersheds.
 - c. Maine Pollution Discharge Elimination System Stormwater Program
- (2) Update the floodplain management ordinance to be consistent with state and federal standards.
- (3) Consider amending local land use ordinances, as applicable, to incorporate low impact development standards.
- (4) Where applicable, develop an urban impaired stream watershed management or mitigation plan that will promote continued development or redevelopment without further stream degradation.
- (5) Enact public wellhead and aquifer recharge area protection mechanisms, as necessary.
- (6) Make water quality "best management practices" information available to farmers and loggers.
- (7) Adopt water quality protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties and require their implementation by the community's officials, employees, and contractors.
- (8) Participate in local and regional efforts to monitor, protect and, where warranted, improve water quality.
- (9) Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.

8. Critical Natural Resources

A. State Goal

To protect the State's other critical natural resources, including without limitation, wetlands, wildlife and fisheries habitat, sand dunes, shorelands, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.8(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Are existing regulations sufficient to protect the community's critical natural resources threatened by development, overuse, or other activities?
- (2) Are local shoreland zone standards consistent with state guidelines and with the standards on adjacent shorelands in neighboring towns?
- (3) What non-regulatory measures can the community take to protect critical natural resources? Are there opportunities to partner with local or regional advocacy groups?
- (4) Is there current regional cooperation or planning underway to protect shared critical natural resources?

- (5) In what other areas will protection of critical natural resources advance comprehensive plan policies (e.g. water resources, economy, recreation, agriculture, and forestry, etc.)?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Critical Natural Resources Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Department of Environmental Protection and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) A map or description of scenic areas and scenic views of local importance, and regional or statewide importance, if available.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To conserve critical natural resources in the community.
- (2) To coordinate with neighboring communities and regional and state resource agencies to protect shared critical natural resources.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Amend local shoreland zone standards to meet current state guidelines.
- (2) Designate critical natural resources as Critical Resource Areas in the Future Land Use Plan.
- (3) Through local land use ordinances, require subdivision or non-residential property developers to look for and identify critical natural resources that may be on site and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.
- (4) Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat program into their review process.
- (5) Adopt natural resource protection practices and standards for construction and maintenance of public roads and properties and require their implementation by the community's officials, employees, and contractors.
- (6) Initiate and/or participate in interlocal and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical natural resources.
- (7) Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
- (8) Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical natural resources about applicable local, state, or federal regulations.

9. Historic and Archaeological Resources

A. State Goal

To preserve the State's historic and archaeological resources.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.9(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Are historic patterns of settlement still evident in the community?
- (2) What protective measures currently exist for historic and archaeological resources and are they effective?
- (3) Do local site plan and/or subdivision regulations require applicants proposing development in areas that may contain historic or archaeological resources to conduct a survey for such resources?
- (4) Have significant historic resources fallen into disrepair, and are there ways the community can provide incentives to preserve their value as an historical resource?
- (5) Is there an active historical society and does the community adequately support its efforts?

C. Condition and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Historic Preservation Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) An outline of the community's history, including a brief description of historic settlement patterns and events contributing to the development and character of the community and its surroundings.
- (3) A brief description of the location, type, extent, condition, use, local, regional, and/or national significance of historic resources, including but not limited to buildings, millworks, bridges, statues, cemeteries, trees, landscapes, and federally and/or locally designated properties and/or districts.
- (4) Identify local historical society and/or preservation organizations.
- (5) A general description of potential threats to the existence, physical integrity, or quality of identified historic and archaeological resources.

D. Policies

Minimum policy required to address state goals:

Protect to the greatest extent practicable the significant historic and archaeological resources in the community.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) For sites with identified potential for historical and archeological resources, through local land use ordinances require subdivision or non-residential developers to look for and identify any historical and archaeological resources and to take appropriate measures to protect those resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design, construction timing, and/or extent of excavation.

- (2) Through local land use ordinances, require the planning board (or other designated review authority) to incorporate maps and information provided by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission into their review process.
- (3) Work with the local or county historical society and/or the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to assess the need for, and if necessary plan for, a comprehensive community survey of the community's historic and archaeological resources.

10. Agricultural and Forest Resources

A. State Goal

To safeguard the State's agricultural and forest resources from development which threatens those resources.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.10(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) How important is agriculture and/or forestry to the community and region? Are these activities growing, stable, or declining? Are the farms or woodlots in the community important for non-economic reasons, such as scenic landscapes, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, or historic significance?
- (2) How are land use patterns and land values contributing to the loss of farm or forest land?
- (3) What regulatory and non-regulatory steps is the community currently taking to support productive farm and forest lands? Are there local or regional land trusts actively working to protect farms or forest lands in the community?
- (4) Are there undeveloped parts of town in which prime farmland soils are prevalent? If so, how are these areas currently being used? How are they being protected?
- (5) Are farm and commercial forest land owners taking advantage of the state's current use tax laws?
- (6) Has proximity of new homes or other incompatible uses affected the normal operations of farms or woodlot owners?
- (7) Are there large tracts of agricultural or industrial forest land that have been or may be sold for development in the foreseeable future? If so, what impact would this have on the community?
- (8) Is clear-cutting an issue in the community? Is the clear-cutting related to normal woodlands management, or is it in preparation for land development?
- (9) Do local farmers and/or loggers take steps to minimize impacts on natural resources in the community? Do local farms participate in Natural Resource Conservation Service programs?
- (10) How does the community support community forestry or agriculture (i.e. small woodlots, community forests, tree farms, community gardens, farmers' markets, or community-supported agriculture)?
- (11) Does the community have, or need, a street tree or other tree planting and maintenance program?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) The community's Comprehensive Planning Agriculture and Forestry Data Set prepared and provided to the community by the Department of Agriculture, the Maine Forest Service, and the Office, or their designees.
- (2) A map and/or description of the community's farms, farmland, and managed forest lands, including information on the importance of these resources to the local and regional economy and rural character.
- (3) Information on the number of farms and acres of farmland in the community enrolled in the state farm and open space law taxation program, including changes in enrollment over the past 10-20 years.
- (4) Information on the number of parcels and acres of forest land enrolled in the state tree growth tax law program, including changes in enrollment over the past 10-20 years.
- (5) A description of any community farming and forestry activities (e.g. street tree program, community garden, farmer's market, or community forest), including identification of managing officials and/or organizations.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To safeguard lands identified as prime farmland or capable of supporting commercial forestry.
- (2) To promote the use of best management practices for timber harvesting and agricultural production.
- (3) To support farming and forestry and encourage their economic viability.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Consult with the Maine Forest Service district forester when developing any land use regulations pertaining to forest management practices.
- (2) Consult with Soil and Water Conservation District staff when developing any land use regulations pertaining to agricultural management practices.
- (3) Amend land use ordinances to require commercial or subdivision developments in *critical rural areas* to maintain areas with prime farm soils as open space to the greatest extent practicable.
- (4) Limit non-residential development in *critical rural areas* to natural resource-based businesses and services, nature tourism/outdoor recreation businesses, farmers' markets, and home occupations.
- (5) Encourage owners of productive farm and forest land to enroll in the current use taxation programs.
- (6) Permit activities that support productive agriculture and forestry operations, such as roadside stands, greenhouses, and pick-your-own operations.
- (7) Include agriculture and commercial forestry operations in local or regional economic development plans.

11. Public Facilities and Services

A. State Goal

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.11(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) Are municipal services adequate to meeting changes in population and demographics?
- (2) In what ways has the community partnered with neighboring communities to share services, reduce costs and/or improve services?
- (3) If the community has a public sewer system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? How is the sanitary district cooperating in the development of the comprehensive plan and related ordinances, as required by law (38 MRSA §1163-A)? How is the sanitary district extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan as required by (38 MRSA §1163)?
- (4) If the town does not have a public sewer or water system, to what extent is this preventing it from accommodating current and projected growth?
- (5) Are existing stormwater management facilities adequately maintained? What improvements are needed? How might cumulative impacts from future development affect the existing system(s)?
- (6) How does the community address septic tank waste? What issues or concerns are there with the current arrangements?
- (7) If the community has a public water system, what issues or concerns are there currently and/or anticipated in the future? How is the water district/supplier cooperating in the development of the comprehensive plan and related ordinances? How is the water system extension policy consistent with the Future Land Use Plan?
- (8) What school improvements, including construction or expansion, are anticipated during the planning period? What opportunities are there to promote new residential development around existing and proposed schools? What steps will be taken to promote walking and bicycling to school?
- (9) Is the community's emergency response system adequate? What improvements are needed?
- (10) How well is the solid waste management system meeting current needs? What is the community doing to reduce the reliance on waste disposal and to increase recycling? What impact will projected growth during the planning period have on system capacity? What improvements are needed to meet future demand? What efforts have been or will be undertaken regionally to improve efficiency and lower cost?
- (11) How do public facilities and services support local economic development plans? What improvements are needed in the telecommunications and energy infrastructure?
- (12) Does the community have a public health officer? Are there significant public health issues?

- (13) What other public facilities, such as town offices, libraries, or cemeteries, are nearing their respective capacities? How will these facilities accommodate projected growth?
- (14) Are the community's priorities for funding needed improvements reflected in the capital investment plan?
- (15) To what extent are investments in facility improvements directed to growth areas?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals includes the identification of the following as applicable for the public facilities and services in 4.11 (C) (a through i):

- (1) location of facilities and service areas (mapped as appropriate);
- (2) general physical condition of facilities and equipment;
- (3) capacity and anticipated demand during the planning period;
- (4) identification of who owns/manages the systems;
- (5) estimated costs of needed capital improvements to public facilities; and
- (6) the following information related to each of these public facilities and services:
 - a. Sewerage and/or Water Supply – Identify number and types of users, and percent of households served.
 - b. Septage – Identify any community policies or regulations regarding septage collection and disposal.
 - c. Solid Waste – Describe the community's solid waste management system. Identify types and amounts of municipal solid waste and recycled materials for the past five (5) years.
 - d. Stormwater Management – Identify combined sewer overflows. For Municipal Separate Stormwater System (MS4) communities, describe plan and status of the major goals of the MS4 requirements.
 - e. Power and Communications – Availability of electricity (including 3-phase power), telephone, Internet (including broadband), and cable within the community.
 - f. Emergency Response System – Describe fire, police, and emergency/rescue facilities and equipment. Include average call response times for different services and dispatch location with number of communities served (Public Safety Answering Point, or PSAP), staffing, and training needs; and E911 addressing management system (addressing officer, ordinance, reporting system).
 - g. Education – Identify school administrative unit. Include primary/secondary school system enrollment for the most recent year information is available and for the ten (10) years after the anticipated adoption of plan. Describe the extent and condition of pedestrian and bicycle access to school facilities.
 - h. Health Care - Describe major health care facilities (hospitals, clinics) and other providers serving the community. Identify public health and social services supported by the community through municipal subsidy.
 - i. Municipal Government Facilities and Services – Describe facilities and staffing for municipal administrative, enforcement, and public works operations.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To efficiently meet identified public facility and service needs.
- (2) To provide public facilities and services in a manner that promotes and supports growth and development in identified growth areas.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies to meet state goals:

- (1) Identify any capital improvements needed to maintain or upgrade public services to accommodate the community's anticipated growth and changing demographics.
- (2) Locate new public facilities comprising at least 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments in designated growth areas.
- (3) Explore options for regional delivery of local services.

12. Fiscal Capacity and Capital Investment Plan

A. State Goal

To plan for, finance and develop an efficient system of public facilities and services to accommodate anticipated growth and economic development.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.12(C) to answer the following questions.

- (1) In general, are tax revenues from new development offsetting the cost of needed additional services and capital investments?
- (2) What are the capital investment and budgeting priorities identified in other sections of the plan?
- (3) What changes in the community's tax base are anticipated and how will it affect the community? What impact do tax exempt properties and tax incentive programs have on taxes?
- (4) How does the community currently fund its capital investments? How will future capital investments identified in the plan be funded? Does the community have any impact fee ordinances?
- (5) If the community plans to borrow to pay for capital investments, does the community have sufficient borrowing capacity to obtain the necessary funds?
- (6) How do county and school administrative unit assessments and/or obligations affect local ability to finance proposed capital investments?
- (7) How are state or local spending limitations, such as those in P. L. 2005, Chapter 2 (effective June 29, 2005) (hereinafter "LD 1"), affecting the community's ability to pay for needed infrastructure and services?
- (8) What efforts has the community made to participate in or explore sharing capital investments with neighboring communities?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) Identify community revenues and expenditures by category for last five (5) years and explain trends.
- (2) Describe means of funding capital items (reserve funds, bonding, etc.) and identify any outside funding sources.
- (3) Describe the community's tax base, its degree of stability and any anticipated changes during the planning period. Include local and state valuations and local mil rates for the last five (5) years.
- (4) Identify any significant tax-exempt properties.
- (5) Calculate current revenue dedicated to tax incentive programs (e.g. tax increment finance district, tree growth, farmland, and open space).
- (6) Identify LD 1 limits for the previous five years. Describe any occasions where LD 1 limits were surpassed, including the purpose and amount.

D. Policies

Minimum policies required to address state goals:

- (1) To finance existing and future facilities and services in a cost effective manner.
- (2) To explore grants available to assist in the funding of capital investments within the community.
- (3) Direct a minimum of 75% of new municipal growth-related capital investments into designated growth areas in the Future Land Use Plan.
- (4) To reduce Maine's tax burden by staying within LD 1 spending limitations.

E. Strategies

Minimum strategies required to address state goals:

- (1) Implement the capital investment plan (CInP) by developing a capital improvement program (CIP).
- (2) Review and/or update the capital improvement program annually or biennially.
- (3) Explore opportunities to work with neighboring communities to plan for and finance shared or adjacent capital investments to increase cost savings and efficiencies.

F. Capital Investment Plan

The comprehensive plan must include a capital investment plan that:

- (1) Identifies and summarizes all anticipated capital investment needs within the planning period, including estimated costs and timing, and identifies which are municipal growth-related capital investments;
- (2) Establishes general funding priorities among the community capital investments; and
- (3) Identifies potential funding sources and funding mechanisms.

13. Existing Land Use

A. State Goal

To encourage orderly growth and development in appropriate areas of each community, while protecting the state's rural character, making efficient use of public services, and preventing development sprawl.

B. Analyses and Key Issues

To generate minimum analyses to address state goals, use Conditions and Trends data in Section 4.13(C) and the community's vision statement to answer the following questions.

- (1) How is most recent development occurring: lot by lot; in subdivisions; or in planned developments? How is recent development consistent with the community's vision?
- (2) If the community considers itself rural, urban, or suburban, what are the characteristics that contribute to that sense? How does it fit in the regional context?
- (3) Is recent development occurring predominantly within or adjacent to traditional settlements or expanding into rural areas?
- (4) How effective are current land use regulations and other non-regulatory measures in directing growth to appropriate areas and protecting critical resources? How might they be improved?
- (5) How do current regulations promote or inhibit development in keeping with the community's traditional village or neighborhood character?
- (6) Given current regulations, development trends, and population projections, how many new residential units and how much commercial, institutional, and/or industrial development will occur in the planning period? Where will this development go?
- (7) What is the community's administrative capacity to manage its land use regulation program, including planning board and code enforcement officer?
- (8) Are environmentally suitable areas within or adjacent to the growth area(s) identified for the location of mobile home parks?

C. Conditions and Trends

Minimum data required to address state goals:

- (1) An existing land use map, by land use classification (such as mixed-use, residential, commercial, institutional, industrial, agricultural, commercial forests, marine, park/recreational, conserved, and undeveloped land).
- (2) A summary of current lot dimensional standards.
- (3) A description or map identifying the location of lots and primary structures created within the last ten years. Include residential, institutional, commercial, and industrial development.
- (4) A map depicting the constraints to development identified in the plan (may be a combination of maps from other sections).
- (5) Identify locations in the community where mobile home parks are allowed.
- (6) Provide a brief description of existing land use regulations and other tools utilized to manage land use, including shoreland zoning, floodplain management, subdivision, site plan review, and zoning ordinances.
- (7) Estimate the minimum amount of land needed to accommodate projected residential, institutional, commercial, or industrial development at least ten (10) years into the future.

- D. See Section 3. Future Land Use Plan for land use policies.
- E. See Section 3. Future Land Use Plan for land use strategies.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 30-A M.R.S.A. §§ 4312(4) and 4347-A (3-A)

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 20, 2007